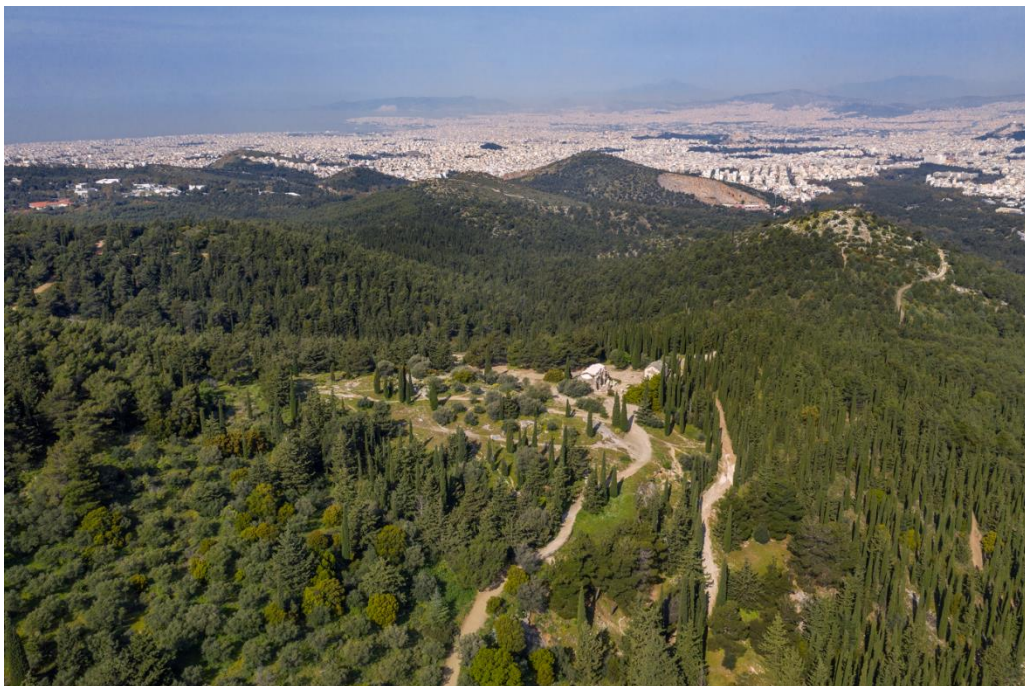


Report with actions to have a more extended, BD rich, better connected and accessible green corridor in Athens for local authorities

LIFE URBAN GREENING PLANS
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The Life UrbanGreeningPlans project has received funding from the LIFE Programme of the European Union.



Introduction

Within the framework of the LIFE Urban Greening Plans program and action A5 “Improvement of ecological and social functions of the largest green corridor in Athens to enrich biodiversity and facilitate the accessibility of all citizens to valuable greenspaces”, Philodassiki Enossi Athinon is calling to create a Report with actions to have a more extended, biodiversity rich, better connected and accessible green corridor in Athens for local authorities.

Green corridors are essential components of urban and peri-urban landscapes, providing a range of ecological, social, and economic benefits. A well-designed and well-managed green corridor can improve the quality of life for people and wildlife alike. However, creating and maintaining a green corridor is a complex task that requires careful planning, investment, and engagement with local communities. This report outlines actions that local authorities can take to extend, enrich, connect, and make green corridors more accessible.

1. Mapping and analysis: The first step in creating a more extended, biodiversity rich, better connected, and accessible green corridor is to map the existing green infrastructure and analyze its condition, quality, and connectivity. This mapping should identify the locations of the existing green spaces, their size, type, and ownership, and their ecological and social value. It should also assess the quality of the green spaces in terms of habitat diversity, tree cover, water quality, soil quality, and recreational facilities.
2. Strategic planning: Based on the mapping and analysis, local authorities should develop a strategic plan for the green corridor, which outlines the goals, objectives, and actions needed to achieve a more extended, biodiversity rich, better connected, and accessible green corridor. The plan should identify the priority areas for investment and the key stakeholders who need to be involved in the implementation process. It should also consider the long-term sustainability of the green corridor and the resources needed to maintain it.
3. Enhancing biodiversity: A critical goal of a green corridor is to support biodiversity by providing habitats for a range of wildlife species. Local authorities can enhance biodiversity in several ways, such as by planting native trees and shrubs, creating wetlands, restoring degraded habitats, and removing invasive species. They should also ensure that the green corridor is designed to support the movement of wildlife between habitats.
4. Improving connectivity: Green corridors need to be well connected to be effective in providing ecological and social benefits. Local authorities can improve connectivity by creating wildlife corridors, cycle paths, and footpaths that connect green spaces. They should also consider the location and design of roads and other infrastructure to minimize their impact on the green corridor.
5. Community engagement: The success of a green corridor depends on the engagement and participation of local communities. Local authorities should engage with the community to develop a shared vision for the green corridor, seek feedback on the

strategic plan, and involve them in the implementation process. They should also provide educational and recreational opportunities for the community to learn about and enjoy the green corridor.

6. **Accessibility:** A green corridor must be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of their age, ability, etc. Local authorities should ensure that the green corridor is designed to be accessible to everyone, with adequate facilities such as parking, seating, toilets, picnic areas, routes and orientation, removal of obstacles, safety and transparency for the elderly. They should also consider the location of the green corridor in relation to public transport and provide facilities for non-motorized transport.

Green Corridor in Athens

More specifically, Philodassiki within the framework of the LIFE Urban Greening Plans program identified the problems that exist in the green corridor and then, after various actions, tried to reach a decision-making framework for the managers of the green corridor with the aim of the improvement of ecological and social functions of the largest green corridor in Athens to enrich biodiversity and facilitate the accessibility of all citizens to valuable green spaces.

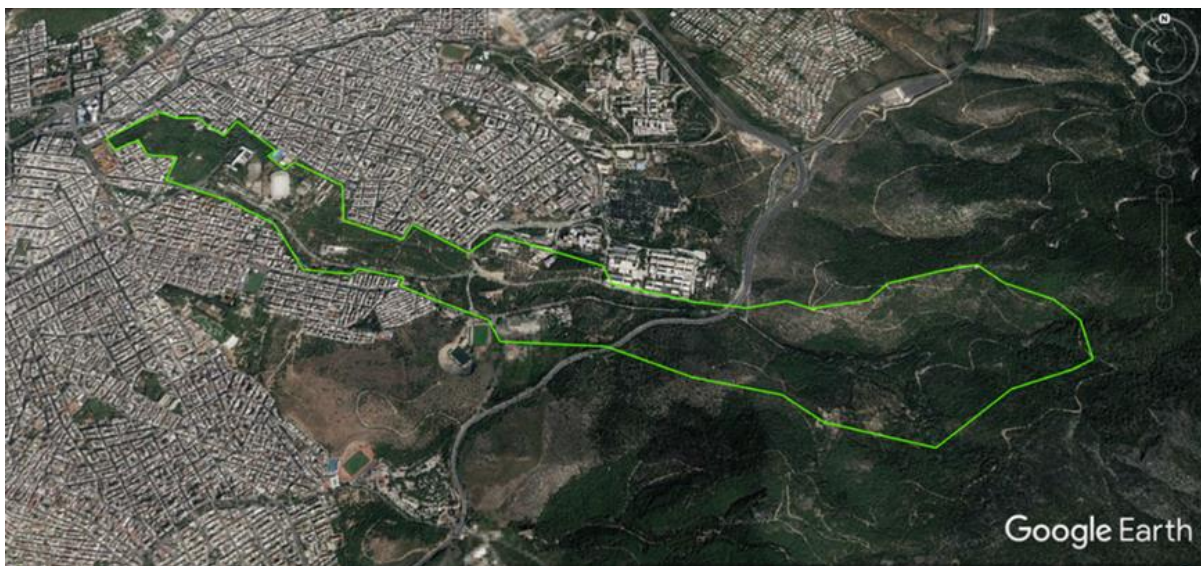


Figure 1: The largest Green Corridor in Athens

While green corridors have many benefits such as enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality, and promoting recreational activities, they can also present some challenges in cities. Here are the main problems that Philodassiki could identify:

1. **Social problems:**
 - There is no an operating regulation for the area. This is considered a problem because the use of the space is wide by various users such as walkers, cyclists, educational programs, entertainment programs, etc.
 - Damages from the carelessness of users.

- There are no signs for the user with the network of accesses and exits in some parts of the green corridor
- Illegal animal cemetery that is considered a threat to public health.

Internal management body problems

- lack of staff,
- the slow procedures in issuing permits for the relevant works,
- the insufficient mechanical equipment,
- opposing opinions among the employees which are responsible for the management of the area.

The effective management of green corridors requires a coordinated and integrated approach, as well as a commitment to ongoing maintenance and evaluation. Local authorities need to ensure that they have the necessary resources, expertise, and governance mechanisms in place to successfully manage these valuable urban assets.

Ecological Problems:

- Very compacted soil, and because of this there is no natural reforestation of the forest because the soil does not support it.
- Creating gaps from dead trees, but the gaps are not renewed because the area is not irrigated. Green corridors require ongoing maintenance, including watering, which can be expensive and time-consuming. This can be a significant challenge for local authorities with limited resources.
- There have been minimal plantings of broadleaf and shrubs which were also left in the natural evolution.
- There are no water taps. Managers have a problem when they want to cut trees for the reaction of citizens around the area.

While green corridors can have significant ecological benefits, it is important to carefully consider the potential problems and to develop strategies to address them. Ecological management of green corridors requires ongoing monitoring and adaptive management to ensure that they remain healthy and resilient in the face of environmental challenges.

Decision support framework – Results

As a result, Philodassiki created a decision support framework based on the views of local authorities and managers of the green corridor through interviews and meetings held within the framework of the LIFE UGP program.

The decision support framework is presented below:

1. Need for funding related to green management.



2. Common green management plan.
3. Need for more staff.
4. There must be an operating regulation with security of the area.
5. The area must be fenced and not open access from all sides (this specifically for the part of the university campus).
6. There should be social control over the visitor's behavior to avoid malicious acts.
7. There should be a better cooperation with the municipalities that have undertaken the part of cleaning and the removal of branches and so on.
8. Create a common fire protection plan. Need for fire protection study.
install an irrigation system.
10. Need for spatial planning study.
11. Need for phytotechnical study with new proposals especially for the areas where the vegetation has completely degraded.

Creating a more extended, biodiversity rich, better connected, and accessible green corridor requires a long-term commitment from local authorities, communities, and stakeholders. By following the actions outlined in this report, local authorities can create a green corridor that provides multiple benefits to the environment, economy, and society.